

BULLETIN OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH

CONTENTS

The Governance of Public Universities: The Missing Parameters -

Hazman Shah Abdullah & Sarina Othman

pp. 3 - 4

Performance Measurement System, Performance Indicators and Funding Mechanism in Malaysian Public Universities: A Conceptual Framework -

*Mohd. Anuar Mazuki, R. Ravindran & Syed
Musa Al Habshi*

pp. 5 - 8

Promoting National Unity Through Academic and Student Activities: The Universiti Malaysia Sabah Experience -

Vincent Pang, Amran Ahmed & Ho Chong Mun

pp. 9 - 10

Relationship between Organisational Culture and Knowledge Management: Scenario of a Malaysian Public Institution of Higher Learning -

*Sharimillah Devi, Siong Choy Chong & Uchenna
Eze Cyril*

pp. 11 - 14

The English Language Curriculum for Petroleum Students at Hadramout University of Science and Technology (HUST) -

Atef Saleh Al-Tamimi & Munir Shuib

pp. 15 - 16

Multimodality of Learning in Higher Education: Issues and Challenges -

Sarjit Kaur & Malini Ganapathy

pp. 17 - 18

Can Teacher Education in Australia Meet the Challenges of the New Millennium? -

Deslea Konza & Gordon Brown

pp. 19 - 20

Negotiating Learning: Are Shortcuts Good or Bad for Our Students? -

*Intan Hashimah Mohd Hashim, Noraida Endut,
Azman Azwan Azmawati, Azrina Husin &
Shukran Abdul Rahman*

pp. 21 - 22

Australian Englishes and the Experiences of International Students -

Peter Kell & Gillian Vogl

pp. 23 - 25

The Learning Experience of Postgraduate Students: Emergent Themes -

Sarjit Kaur & Shakila Abdul Manan

pp. 26 - 28

SPECIAL 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Issues and Challenges in Enhancing the Quality of Private Transnational Higher Education in Malaysia

An interview with Y.Bhg. Professor Tan Sri Datuk Anuwar Ali

By Munir Shuib & Rozinah Jamaludin



Y.Bhg. Professor Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Anwar Ali

The rapid growth in the demand for higher education in Malaysia and the lack of capacity of the national system to meet this demand have given rise to the emergence and expansion of private transnational higher education providers in the country. While an international linkage in educational provision is certainly a positive development, there are certain concerns which need to be addressed, one of which is quality.

In an interview with IPPTN, the President and Vice-Chancellor of Open University Malaysia (OUM), Y.Bhg. Professor Tan Sri Datuk Anuwar Ali, gave his views on the issue of quality among transnational higher education service providers in Malaysia.

Quality, in his view, is of utmost importance in private transnational higher education (TNHE). He recalled the time when private TNHE emerged in Malaysia in the late 1990s. Even then there were some concerns about the quality of its providers. One of the concerns pertained to the level of emphasis given to quality by branch campuses set up by foreign universities in Malaysia.

According to Professor Anuwar, the delivery system of a branch campus might differ from that of its parent university. Consequently, students who graduated from the branch campus might not be of the same quality as those who

graduated from the parent university. He put forth the following questions:

"Are we sure the programmes we have here are of the same quality as those offered in the parent university? Are we sure the branch campuses offer the same amount of input as that of the parent university?"

Private TNHE providers in Malaysia, as in many other countries, are profit-driven. They survive mainly on student enrolment. Therefore students with a very minimal qualification are given admission as long as they are able to pay their tuition fees.

"Are we sure the programmes we have here are of the same quality as those offered in the parent university? Are we sure the branch campuses offer the same amount of input as that of the parent university?"

According to Professor Anuwar, higher education institutions should not look at TNHE just as a source of income but must also place a high degree of emphasis on quality. They should have high-quality academics, infrastructure, human resources, and governance. In addition, they should develop high-quality curricula and encourage research and innovation.

Nevertheless, Professor Anuwar believes that TNHE providers still have a long way to go as far as quality is concerned, despite fulfilling the quality assurance requirements of the National Accreditation Board. In the near future there is the Malaysian Qualification Agency which will set the rating and ranking of each TNHE provider.

Private TNHE in Malaysia face a number of challenges. One of the main challenges, according to Professor Anuwar, is getting the right academic staff.

"Private TNHE providers", he said, "do not have the same amount of resources and levels of incentives for their academic staff like those enjoyed by staff in the public sector".

As a result, they have difficulty attracting top-level academicians such as professors and lecturers with

Ph.Ds. Another challenge plaguing many private TNHE providers concerns the teaching competency of their academic staff. In many of the institutions, the academicians may not have sufficient training in teaching. This has great implications on the quality of teaching and learning in the institutions.

Teaching and learning in private TNHE institutions in Malaysia occur in several forms, such as face-to-face instruction, blended learning and virtual learning. Currently, the most common is the conventional face-to-face instruction. Blended learning, said Professor Anuwar, is gaining popularity, especially among providers of open and distance learning such as OUM. However, virtual learning has been less successful. As a case in point, he cites a local private university which used to offer its programmes through virtual learning. It later reverted to conventional learning as the former was not well-received by Malaysian students. He believes the problem had to do with the public's perception of virtual learning. *"People are sceptical about virtual learning; they are not ready for it",* he reasoned.

Professor Anuwar envisages that in the future, the most common approach which will be adopted by private TNHE providers would be computer-enhanced learning or e-learning. He says that in order for the approach to be carried out effectively, the educational institutions must provide the relevant training to their teaching staff and give due recognition and incentives to those who adopt the approach in their teaching.

With the increase in the student population of Malaysia, the demand for TNHE is also expected to increase. The provision of quality services by TNHE providers is therefore critical. It is not a matter of choice but rather, a matter of obligation.

...TNHE providers still have a long way to go as far as quality is concerned, despite fulfilling the quality assurance requirements of the National Accreditation Board. In the near future there is the Malaysian Qualification Agency which will set the rating and ranking of each TNHE provider.